What means Digital Immigrant accent?

First, we must define what is a Digital Immigrant. Those people who were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in their lives, become fascinated by an adopted many or most aspects of the new technology are Digital Immigrants.

The “digital immigrant accent” can be seen in such things as turning to the Internet for information second rather than first, or in reading the manual for a program rather than if the program itself will teach us to use it.

There are hundreds of examples of the digital immigrant accent. They include printing out your email (or having your secretary print it out for you – an even “thicker” accent); needing to print out a document written on the computer in order to edit it (rather than just editing on the screen); and bringing people physically into your office to see an interesting web site (rather than just sending them the URL). I’m sure you can think of one or two examples of your own without much effort. My own favourite example is the “Did you get my email?” phone call.

Digital Natives are used to receiving information fast. They like to parallel process and multi-task. They prefer their graphics *before* their text rather than the opposite. They prefer random access (like hypertext). They function best when networked. They thrive on instant gratification and frequent rewards. They prefer games to “serious” work.

These skills are almost totally foreign to the Immigrants, who themselves learned – and so choose to teach – slowly, step-by-step, one thing at a time, individually, and above all, seriously.

So, in conclusion, the Digital Immigrant accent are the differences of thinking between these and the Digital Natives, as they haven’t grown up with technology but they have learned to use it.